SEE 127-134 AND 135
"RICE CUP THEORY"

THE CHOICE: The Issue of Black Survival in America

by
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who, under the circumstances of poverty, would not be well nourished. A luncheon was agreed upon, at which Dr. Lowe and two members of his panel would continue to explain the finer points of their proposals. At the luncheon with Dr. Lowe were Dr. Howard N. Jacobson, of the Harvard School of Medicine, the vice-chairman of the panel, and Robert W. Harkins, director of research at the Ross Laboratories, Columbus, Ohio.

On the afternoon of the second day of the conference, Dr. Lowe was asked how the proposals were going in the panel sessions. He answered that formulation was complete and passage had been virtually assured from the strong support given in the panel by Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, of the Population Council. A look at the panel itself showed only one black person present, a woman who admitted that she hadn't really recognized the proposal for what it was when it was presented. She didn't really understand it, she said, but hadn't wanted to hold up proceedings by asking "stupid" questions.

Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, the brave black civil rights lady of Ruleville, Mississippi, still ailing and lame from police beatings over the years, was resting on a bench in the lobby of the Sheraton-Park Hotel. Asked whether she would favor such birth control measures as those proposed by Dr. Lowe's panel, she responded with shock and grave disappointment. "What?!" she exclaimed. "What are you talking about? Birth control? I didn't come here to talk about birth control. I came here to get some food to feed poor, hungry people. Where are they carrying on that kind of talk?"

Hearing the location, and without another word, the gallant lady pulled herself up on a cane and headed for the panel's meeting room. Along the way, she spotted certain black men whom she summoned to follow her. She arrived at the room with about half a dozen bold black men who walked to the front of the room and stood like soldiers. Mrs. Hamer followed them to the front and stood in the center of the panel leaders, demanding to be heard.

Dr. Lowe yielded.

She then demanded that the birth control proposal, which had just been adopted, be reconsidered. After a ten-minute oration, spelling out the horror of such a law in the hands of public officials she had known, the resolution was obliterated. After a promise from Dr. Lowe and the panelists that no such resolution would be further entertained, Mrs. Hamer and her black male aides marched out as directly as they had come.

Quite apparently, a major objective of what was originally called "The White House Conference on Hunger" had failed. However, that tentative failure by no means obscured from the poor a clear attitude which the government would seek to implement as law and policy: *The solution to the hunger problem would not be more food to feed the hungry, but fewer hungry persons to be fed.*

Nowhere is this attitude more a fact of life than in the U.S. Rice Cup, the nation's center of power and prejudice.

C. *The U.S. Rice Cup: Center of Power and Prejudice*

William Robert (Bob) Poage was born three days after Christmas in 1899. He grew up in his home town, Waco, Texas, and spent much of his childhood on a ranch. He is an active member of the American Legion and a lawyer by trade. In 1936, he was elected to the Seventy-fifth Congress and reelected to every succeeding one. By reasons of longevity and seniority, he happens to be chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture.

Congressman Poage believes that the owner of a big farm should get unlimited subsidies for not farming the land, but he fears that a poor man receiving $30 a month to buy food stamps under federal family assistance would likely spend the money on "liquor, or for pot, or for those sort of things." He also speaks out against Socialism and Communism.

On October 31, 1969, just a month before the White House conference on hunger, Chairman Poage conducted hearings on the federal food stamp program. The chairman

is suspicious that free or low-cost food to the hungry would take away their incentive to work. He put the question to one witness, Stephen Kurzman, a lawyer with the Urban Coalition: "Do you think we can just continue to make it just as profitable to sit under the tree as it is to work, and expect to find as many people working as we have today?"

Responded Kurzman: "I am afraid, Mr. Chairman, that we disagree on very basic premises. I think there is very little evidence that any significant proportion of those who receive food stamps or any other kind of food assistance are choosing to do so, so as to elect not to work."

But Chairman Poage was by no means persuaded by Kurzman or anyone else who said food wouldn't make poor people lazy. So, the chairman gave Kurzman a little lecture on what ought to be done. It concluded like this:

> Now, if you ask me to help that fellow have a better life down at the pool hall, why I am just not interested in helping him. I am interested in helping that family, but I am not interested in helping that bird who could work just as well as I can. Are you? . . .
>
> The point I am making is I have not understood why you and others, who have appeared before this Committee, who have a legitimate and proper as I see it concern for the needy are also so concerned in maintaining a bunch of drones.
>
> You know what happens in the beehive. They kill those drones. That is what happens in most primitive societies. Maybe we have just gotten too far away from the situation of primitive man.

Reporting that discussion, the *Action Report,* a publication of the National Council on Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States, headlined it, "Sick Humor: A Modest Proposal to Kill the Hungry . . ." and raised the question: "Genocide, anyone?"

Obviously, because of his chairmanship, Congressman Poage is one of the men of power in Congress, but he is

more than that. He is a man of particular power, special interests, and a point of view. He is a member of the "Rice Empire"—a group of Congressmen, who, because of their seniority and chairmanships, wield inordinate power and who represent the five states which make up this country's "Rice Cup."

The five Rice Cup states are Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and California. This terminology—Rice Cup—suggests a comparative relationship to the Asian-Rice Bowl countries of Indochina—Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Laos, and Cambodia. These countries have traditionally been called the Rice Bowl because they consume a large proportion of the world's rice and because, prior to 1960, they had raised most of it inside their own borders.

These Rice Cup representatives hold the reins of power and racial prejudice here at home and profit most from wars both against racial minorities in America and against the rice-eating colored populations in Asia. The key remains food. In Asia, that means rice. In the Rice Cup, it means several things: high subsidies paid to farmers *not* to grow certain crops; high price supports guaranteed them for the crops they do grow, such as rice; and the *obsolescence* of black cotton-choppers resulting from government policies and from the mechanization of farming. No longer productive, as Chairman Poage defined the situation, black erstwhile cotton-choppers no longer deserve to eat—that is, to live.

While the Blackpoor are nonproductive and obsolete, and while such Congressmen as Chairman Poage consider it socialistic or communistic to help them, Senator Eastland and thousands of other wealthy farmers are paid *not* to be productive. Eastland and Poage are both from the Rice Cup. Mississippi and Texas farmers sell rice to Asians.

The psychic key is race, but the economic key, the vested interest, is rice. The holders of the keys are a close-knit Congressional clique who represent the Rice Cup states. The key to their strength is the seniority system

which gives them chairmanships over the crucial Congressional committees which run the legislative branch of government, and to that extent they exercise extraordinary influence over the other two branches as well. It is with these chairmanships that they become the elements of political control in the country, and their sentiments become the controlling sentiments of the country, both at home and abroad.

To reach a quick understanding of this power and its dynamics, one is tempted to state flatly that U.S. troops are fighting in Vietnam merely to satisfy the vested interests of the Rice Cup clique. The same would be said of the war against colonized Blacks at home, nearly half of them still residing in the five Rice Cup and neighboring states. But rather than state this flatly, a discussion of the facts will arrive at a more reasoned conclusion.

In 1969, Congressman Paul Findley, an Illinois Republican and newspaper publisher, made a valiant attempt to limit to $20,000 the welfare payments to wealthy, nonproductive farmers. The saving—some $400 million—he argued, could be diverted to feed the poor. House Minority Leader Gerald Ford engineered the defeat of Findley's amendment to the Agriculture Appropriations bill, but Findley's research of vested interests and incredible unfairness was made public.

On May 12, 1969, Findley placed in the *Congressional Record* a tabulation of the counties which reject federal food assistance to the poor but themselves gobble up massive payments for imposing a scarcity of food by not farming. While Findley's speech inserting the tabulation failed to override the big-farm lobbies, he clearly showed the vested interests the Rice Cup elite have in starvation at home and "defoliated" crops abroad.

Findley told the House:

> According to President Nixon, there are over 400 counties in the United States which are not now participating in any Federal food-aid program for the poor. The President very commendably has stated his

determination that by next July a food-aid program will exist in each of these counties. It is important to recall that Lyndon Johnson, while President, expressed a similar determination but did not succeed.

For some reason, these counties have proved to be strangely but effectively resistant to Federal food aid to their poor, and perhaps their resistance will tend to thwart President Nixon's promise to the poor and hungry. Indeed, Agriculture Secretary Hardin, in testifying last week on the administration's food-aid program, stated:

"I want to emphasize—as strongly as I can—that the success or failure of our Federal efforts to eliminate hunger and poverty-induced malnutrition depends heavily on the level of concern and action by states and local communities."

The statistics I am today placing in the Record concerning the non-food-program counties—425 are actually listed—are revealing. They give important dimensions to the problem and at the same time suggest a way to meet part of the food-aid costs.

They also lead to the embarrassing conclusion that Federal food aid to poor families is deliberately excluded from the very counties where farm production is curbed at extremely high cost to the taxpayer.

Deliberate exclusion of Federal food aid by these counties is a fact. Although limitations exist in the availability to additional counties of the food-stamp program, the direct distribution program, under which 22 items of food can be distributed free to the poor, is immediately available to any county in the United States and has been for years.

That farm production is curbed at high cost in these counties is evident from farm program payments made to farmers. For the most part these payments are made in exchange for agreement not to grow feed grains, wheat, and cotton. . . .

But what makes this practice truly astonishing, and directly contrary to that of Biblical days, is that it is so

extensive in the very counties which bar poor people from access to free or low-cost food from the Federal largess. It is incredible that these counties, with tax bases swollen by Federal aid capitalized into the wealthy farmers' land values, flatly refuse Federal aid to their poor people.

Why does this incredible practice exist? [Emphasis added.]

Surely not because of a local philosophical aversion to welfare, even Federal welfare. After all, Federal farm payments cannot possibly be explained or justified except as a means of providing income support. Income support is but another interchangeable expression for welfare. And let there be no mistake as to which farmers are receiving the most income support—or welfare—from Federal farm programs. It is not the little farmer. Nor is it the average farmer. Rather, it is the large, often wealthy farmer who receives most of the benefits from farm programs. The top 15 percent of the farmers, with sales in excess of $20,000 per year, receive almost one-half of the $3 billion plus in Government payments each year.

Plainly, the political leadership of these counties finds Federal handouts to wealthy farmers something they can live with, but Federal handouts to hard-core poor something else.

I would hate to think that this deplorable situation is to be explained as reflecting an aversion to poor people themselves. Surely the local leadership in denying Federal food benefits does not purposefully take this means to encourage poor people to move on and take their troubles elsewhere. Out of sight, out of mind, the saying goes.

Nor would I want to think that in areas where poor people are predominately Negro, it might reflect a *racial bias*. . . .

Of the non-food-aid counties, the one whose farmers received the largest total in Federal payments is Lynn County, Tex., with $8,903,000.

This is especially noteworthy because Lynn showed a population of only 10,914 with 2,282—nearly 25 percent—classified as hard-core poor.

The number of Lynn County families directly benefiting from the farm payments happens to be about the same as those classified as hard-core poor. Their income from farm payments alone, however, is more than three times the gross income of the poor. This estimate is based on $1,200 as the national average income of the hard-core poor.

[In Texas] . . . farm payments totaled more than $2 million each in 14 [counties], and more than $1 million each in 14 others. Put another way, 28 were million-dollar-plus counties but hardly so viewed by poor people.

Actually, Texas leads the Nation in size of farm payments and in total poor people without access to a Federal food-aid program.

Of $3 billion in direct payments in 1967 nationally, Texas farmers received $457 million, which was 15 percent of the Nation's total and more than twice as much as its nearest competitor, Kansas. . . .

While Texas has 53 farmers who got over $100,000 each, and 278 who got between $50,000 and $99,999 each, Kansas had no farmers in the first category and only nine in the second.*

The stark immorality of this farm subsidy arrangement is further indicated by the fact that some of the payments for *not* producing go as high as nearly $3 million per farmer per year. It is impossible that one farmer's nonproduction is that much more valuable than that of the day laborer or a man who spends his weeks and months in an unsuccessful search for work.

Nonetheless, based on 1967 figures as submitted by Congressman Findley, three California farmers, for example, shared a bounty of $8,259,579 for *not* farming.

* *Congressional Record,* May 12, 1969, pp. H-3531-H-3532.

Five other California farmers split nonproducing "earnings" of $3,552,019. Farmers in other Rice Cup states did quite well also, while setting records for denying the federal government the permission to establish food-aid programs for the poor in their states.

Nonproducing Texas farmers, for example, received a total of $457,205,685 in 1967, while rejecting federal food aid for the poor in 99 of their counties. Louisiana rejected such poor aid in 7 parishes, while the state's big farmers were given $55,463,315 *not* to farm.

Perhaps most decent Americans would not believe that such an immoral system could operate in the company of the men of high integrity and purpose they believe they send to Congress every two or six years. In fact, to insure that their men *are* men of high character and moral conscience, on election day many districts tend to recall their representatives in favor of what the voters regard as better people. This happens in many districts but not in all of them. It is, in fact, the longevity and seniority of the most immoral and venal Congressmen that enable them to thwart the best efforts of the others. Good men, of course, also get elected for long periods to Congress. Yet it is true that conscientious voters replace their Representatives periodically, while other voters, especially in the Deep South, retain their same Representatives for generations. It happens, then, that often the repeaters who get the seniority and, hence, the chairmanships, come from the least innovative, most repressive areas of the country.

The slightest examination of the Congressional committees and their hierarchy shows this to be true when the Nixon administration came to power. Rice becomes an important factor in this when it is recalled that Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, California, and Mississippi produce the bulk of the commercial rice grown in the United States; their Congressmen, together with their colleagues from neighboring states, control virtually every key committee in both houses of Congress.

One of the Rice Cup states, California, has no committee chairman in the Senate and only one in the

House. The other Rice Cup states are located in the Deep South, and theirs is the most formidable power bloc in Congress. Of the 16 standing committees of the Senate, for example, seven chairmen are from the four Deep South states of the Rice Cup, while three other chairmen (Senators Richard B. Russell of Georgia, John Sparkman of Alabama, and B. Everett Jordan of North Carolina) are Deep Southerners whose views are known to be equally conservative. In effect, the Rice Cup sentiment controls 10 of the 16 standing committees of the Senate.

In the House, seven chairmen of the 21 standing committees represent the four Deep South Rice Cup states. Excluding comparatively noncritical committees, such as the committees on House Administration and on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, the Rice Cup states then command 7 of 11 of the most important House committees.

In both the House and Senate, the *most* crucial committees are commanded by Rice Cup Congressmen. For example, the Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee, which controls subsidies to rich farmers, has Louisiana's Ellender as its chairman, and his backup men are Senators Spessard Holland of Florida, Eastland (who, himself, gets an unconscionable welfare subsidy), Georgia's Talmadge, and Jordan of North Carolina. Similarly, the Appropriations Committee, on whose action the financial operation of the entire federal government depends, has Georgia's Senator Russell as chairman, but the line of succession is Ellender and Arkansas' McClellan, and includes Mississippi's John Stennis, who is chairman of the militarily powerful Armed Services Committee.

The extent to which these ranking members stand in line to succeed one another is just another indication of their hammerlock on the political trading process and of the extent to which they can control the direction and even the *existence* of legislation. No bill, for example, can reach the Senate floor for debate and action without approval by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Judiciary chairman is Mississippi's Eastland, whose backup is another Rice

Cupper, McClellan, who happens to be the number one man on the Government Operations Committee which holds the reins on how the bureaucracy operates.

To a lesser degree, the same is true in the House where there are 335 more members and five more committees than in the Senate. The most casual look at the lineup of chairmanships in the House gives instant proof of the fact that Texans ride most high in the financial saddle. The Constitution restricts the origination of tax revenue bills to the House of Representatives. The committee in the House controlling such matters is the Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Arkansas banker Wilbur Mills. But Mills's fellow Rice Cupper, Wright Patman, is chairman of Banking and Currency, while another Texan, George Mahon, is chairman of the omnipotent House Appropriations Committee.

Not all Rice Cup Congressmen, of course, are rabid racists or zealots for the Indochina war. Exceptions are rare, however, with freshman Senator Alan Cranston, a Democrat of California, and Texas's Democratic Senator Ralph Yarborough being most notable among the exceptions in the Senate. However, Yarborough, who was serving as chairman of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee, opposed the war in Indochina and supported civil rights and was defeated in a 1970 primary bid to retain his Senate seat.

Arkansas' Senator J. William Fulbright, who as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was in a position to have fought effectively against escalations in Indochina, merely talked against them after giving them a crucial boost with his support of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. A clearer explanation of why he was able to oppose the war and still maintain his Senate seat in 1968 is indicated by his views on civil rights.

Shortly before the Nixon inaugural, HEW Secretary Finch returned to California for a visit and told a news conference that because Blacks had not voted for President Nixon, the Nixon administration could afford to deal more

"candidly" with black problems. He said also, regarding school desegregation, that each community in the nation is a "different slice of pie" and would be treated differently, and that, therefore, there would be no consistent civil rights enforcement on school desegregation. This, of course, made many segregationists happy, including Fulbright. There were others less happy about it, among them Indiana's Senator Vance Hartke, who, like Fulbright, is a member of the Senate Finance Committee before which Finch appeared on January 14, 1969, seeking confirmation in the HEW job. In response to Hartke's questioning, Finch repeated the "different slice" doctrine. When it was Fulbright's turn to question Finch, Fulbright was full of compliments, but seeking reassurance that Finch would not go soft on school desegregation:

> Fulbright: I . . . want to compliment you on what to me was a very perceptive comment made to the Senator from Indiana about each community having a chemistry of its own. Many people who have become immersed in the Washington bureau forget that. They assume naturally that all communities are the same, but they are not. I hope you do not lose your views that you expressed so well.
>
> Finch: I will keep a certain amount of chauvinism.
>
> Fulbright: . . . You said it so well. . . . Well, thank you very much, and I have great hopes for your appointment. I know of your experience, and from what you said, you have made a very good impression.

Confirming the "right" appointees is only one of the powerful prerogatives of the Rice Cup Senators who achieve seniority rank on key committees. The adjoining chart of the committee chairmanships for the first session of the Ninety-first Congress (beginning March 3, 1969) graphically shows the inordinate concentration of power and prejudice in the hands of the U.S. Rice Cup.

Congressional Chairmanships, Ninety-first Congress
(Rice Cup Representatives with asterisk;
their allies in *italics*.)

Senate	*House*
1. Aeronautical and Space Sciences *Richard B. Russell* (Ga.) (N. Mex.) Clinton P. Anderson	1. Agriculture *W. R. (Bob) Poage (Tex.) *John L. McMillan* (S.C.) *Thomas G. Abernethy (Miss.)
2. Agriculture and Forestry *Allen J. Ellender (La.) *Spessard L. Holland* (Fla.) *James O. Eastland (Miss.)	2. Appropriations *George Mahon (Tex.) Michael J. Kirwan (Ohio) *Jamie L. Whitten (Miss.)
3. Appropriations *Richard B. Russell* (Ga.) *Allen J. Ellender (La.) *John L. McClellan (Ark.)	3. Armed Services *L. Mendel Rivers* (S.C.) Philip J. Philbin (Mass.) *F. Edward Hébert (La.)
4. Armed Services *John C. Stennis (Miss.) *Richard B. Russell* (Ga.)	4. Banking and Currency *Wright Patman (Tex.)
5. Banking and Currency *John Sparkman* (Ala.)	5. District of Columbia *John L. McMillan* (S.C.) *Thomas G. Abernethy (Miss.)
6. Commerce Warren G. Magnuson (Wash.)	6. Education and Labor Carl D. Perkins (Ky.)
7. District of Columbia *Joseph D. Tydings* (Md.)	7. Foreign Affairs Thomas E. Morgan (Pa.)
8. Finance *Russell B. Long (La.)	8. Government Operations William L. Dawson (Ill.)
9. Foreign Relations *J. William Fulbright (Ark.) *John Sparkman* (Ala.)	9. House Administration Samuel N. Friedel (Md.)
10. Government Operations *John L. McClellan (Ark.)	10. Interior and Insular Affairs Wayne N. Aspinall (Colo.)
11. Interior and Insular Affairs Henry M. Jackson (Wash.)	11. Interstate and Foreign Commerce Harley O. Staggers (W. Va.)
	12. Judiciary Emanuel Celler (N.Y.)

12. Judiciary
    *James O. Eastland (Miss.)
    *John L. McClellan (Ark.)
13. Labor and Public Welfare
    *Ralph Yarborough (Tex.)
14. Post Office and Civil Service
    Gale W. McGee (Wyo.)
    *Ralph Yarborough (Tex.)
15. Public Works
    Jennings Randolph (W. Va.)
16. Rules and Administration
    B. Everett Jordan (N.C.)
13. Merchant Marine and Fisheries
    Edward A. Garmatz (Md.)
14. Post Office and Civil Service
    Thaddeus J. Dulski (N.Y.)
15. Public Works
    George H. Fallon (Md.)
16. Rules
    *William M. Colmer (Miss.)
17. Science and Astronautics
    *George P. Miller (Calif.)
18. Standard of Official Conduct
    Melvin Price (Ill.)
19. Un-American Activities
    Richard H. Ichord (Mo.)
20. Veterans' Affairs
    *Olin E. Teague (Tex.)
21. Ways and Means
    *Wilbur D. Mills (Ark.)

The rice elite in Congress require that Asians buy U.S. rice. They do this in precisely the same way colonized Blacks in South Africa and in the United States are always required to buy from someone else—at the other party's price—in order to survive, however shabbily, however tentatively.

The colony principle is a patented feature of the ghetto life in America: perpetual economic and cultural rape. In Dayton, Ohio, during the early 1960's, a black man sitting in the front row before the start of a meeting of the City Plan Board was hailed by a board member who thought the black man was wearing a Masonic ring. When Park Wineland, who had been a member of the board for thirty-four years, finally got the black man's attention, they discovered that Wineland had been mistaken about the ring.

"Well," said Wineland, not the least discouraged, "you

ought to join—there's a Masonic temple right near where you live."

"Have we met before?" asked the black man, attending his first board meeting.

"No, not that I know of," confessed Wineland.

"Then," asked the black man, "how did you know where I live?"

"Aw, come on!" Wineland begged off good-naturedly, then acknowledged that the man's *color* was enough to indicate where in Dayton the black man lived.

Wineland was right: The black man lived only two blocks off Germantown Street, the street on which the Prince Hall Temple Masonic Lodge stood, exactly 1.2 miles from the black man's doorstep. What the veteran city planner knew was what *everyone* in Dayton knew: If a man was Black, whenever he came to Dayton, he simply had no alternative to going across the Third Street bridge to find living quarters somewhere between the Miami River on the east, Wolf Creek on the north, Nicholas Road on the south, and Gettysburg Avenue on the west. There were *no* exceptions. Thus, all the real estate broker had to do was stand at the bridge and wait, with 100 percent assurance that he could rent the new black arrival an apartment or sell him a house under whatever conditions and price the broker chose.

As in other communities across the United States, the power elite in Dayton guaranteed this exploitation at whatever expense or insanity was required. For example, when the issue of Blacks not being able to buy or build a home outside the Westside colony became a public issue in 1962, every banking institution in town went on record acknowledging the fact that they would flatly reject any loan request to any black person who wanted to buy or build outside the Westside colony. Bankers were quick to explain, however, that the policy was for the good of the entire city, including the victims.

"The goodness" of the policy was that racial and economic segregation facilitated every conceivable exploitation. The failure of a city bond issue, for example,

meant a cutback in city services. What would be more convenient than having all victims of the cutback in one place? How better to insure that certain groups always bear the brunt of any public dislocation and that selected other groups still make whatever profit there is to be made?

Balancing the city budget despite the failure of a bond issue was made easier by the concentration of all Blacks in a Westside colony. The failure of a bond issue would not deprive other sections of the city of such adequate facilities as fire protection, street, traffic, and other safety improvements, and educational expansion. Nor would the lack of these things increase fire insurance rates, create safety hazards, or further cripple educational services in any area of the city except on the Westside. Only the carefully designed colony would suffer these disadvantages. Segregation was an invaluable tool of colonization and exploitation.

Herman Miller's revelation* of the 1960's that the poor pay more is now an unshocking truism. And when they pay more, they pay it to the colonizers—to the real estate broker in Dayton and to the Lynn County farmer who sells rice to Asians, collects millions from his own government in subsidies and price supports, and denies federal food aid to the "human scrap heap" outside the gate. There is ample evidence that the colonized poor pay more, and that ruthless, irrational action meets any attempt to break away from the colony.**

In late 1969, for example, when a group of black people

* Herman P. Miller, *Rich Man, Poor Man* (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964).

** Under the headline "Poor Pay 60% More, FTC Study Finds," the April, 1968, edition of *Law in Action*, a monthly publication of OEO's Legal Services Program, reported the following:

Furniture and appliance retailers that cater to the poor in Washington, D.C., charge an average of 60% more for merchandise than stores dealing with the general public, according to a large-scale study by the Federal Trade Commission.

The survey of 96 retailers with estimated sales of at least $100,000 in 1966 found that those who purchased at low-income

stores paid heavily for the cost of "easy credit," door-to-door selling, and collecting on installment contracts.

The survey disclosed that without exception low-income market retailers had high average markups and prices. On the average, goods purchased for $100 at wholesale sold for $255 in the low-income market stores, compared with $159 in general market stores.

The retailers studied had combined sales of $226 million or 85% of the sales of furniture, appliance and department store retailers in the District of Columbia.

Chairman Paul Rand Dixon of the FTC said that the agency would have found much the same situation "if we had studied Philadelphia, Louisville, or San Francisco."

The report called for a requirement that finance charges be clearly and conspicuously stated but said this was only part of the solution. . . .

The report found that a small group of the low-income market retailers used the courts extensively to collect on installment contracts. Eleven of 18 low-income retailers obtained 2,690 judgments that resulted in 1,568 garnishments and 306 repossessions. They obtained one judgment for every $2,200 in sales.

The FTC noted that creditors could seek both repossession and payment of deficiencies including penalties. It suggested that creditors be required to choose one or the other of these remedies, and not be permitted to pursue both courses at the same time. . . .

Contrasts between the markup policies of low-income and general market retailers are most apparent when specific products are compared. Retailers surveyed were asked to give the wholesale and retail prices for their two best-selling models in each product line. These price data are typical of the large volume of products sold by each class of retailer.

For every product specified, low-income market retailers had the highest average gross margins reported. When similar makes and models are compared, the differences are striking. For example, the wholesale cost of a portable TV set was about $109 to both a low-income market and a general market retailer. The general market retailer sold the set for $129.95, whereas the low-income market retailer charged $219.95 for the same set. Another example is a dryer, wholesaling at about $115, which was sold for $150 by a general market retailer and for $300 by a low-income market retailer.

who call themselves Muslims bought cattle and land in St. Clair County, Alabama, and attempted to produce their own food, colonial insanity broke out. In a page-one banner story, the December 2, 1969, edition of the Washington *Afro-American* reported:

> A group of angry white St. Clair County residents, estimated at 2,200 or more, met in a local school last Friday night to decide what action should be taken to regain land legally sold to the Chicago-based Black Muslims.
>
> The land in question, over 900 acres, was purchased in cash for over $300,000 by the Muslims and will be used as the site of a $2.5 million industrial-agricultural complex.
>
> Among other facilities, they plan to have a cement manufacturing plant, a lumber yard, a slaughter house and a meat-processing plant which will employ local black non-Muslims and some local whites.
>
> The Muslims were attacked in speeches as being anti-Christian and a threat to the local community. The white conservatives said they [the Muslims] are seeking to use the land as a guerrilla warfare training base for black revolutionaries. . . .
>
> Spokesmen for the whites said that the fight [to oust the Muslims] would be channelled through the courts.
>
> *With the support of the governor, Albert Brewer, state Atty. Gen. McDonald Gallion and U.S. Rep. William Nichols,* D-Ala., *seven court suits have been filed to date.* [Emphasis added.]
>
> Four suits contest the legality of the Muslim organization and its non-compliance with Alabama State law which requires Muslims, Communists and Nazis to register after spending five consecutive days in the state.
>
> Three civil suits challenge the legality of the land title. . . .
>
> A worker who showed up at the farm last week was arrested under the Alabama law that requires Black Muslims, Communists, Nazis and others deemed subversive, to register after five days. . . .
>
> It is one of many properties owned by the Muslims who are among the most peaceful citizens anywhere.
>
> When they bought land in Missouri, there was some tension for a time by white residents, but now they appear to be welcome and they operate one of the most modern and productive dairy farms in the state. . . .
>
> The sect's leader, Elijah Muhammad, teaches his members to work hard to own *something for themselves and to try to build an economic base for black people.* [Emphasis added.]

The court suits against the Muslims failed. However, despite the Muslims' insistence that they had come merely to provide for themselves economically, the county's 20,000 whites (60% majority) were not through. They were determined that such an effort must fail. So, in mid-March of 1970, the Muslims found scores of their cattle lying dead in the pastures, victims of poison which authorities said was cyanide. With that, the Muslims put the poisoned land up for sale, loaded up what live cattle remained and, under threats to their own lives, departed St. Clair County.

The economic measures attempted by the Muslims threatened the economic value of the black colony by making it self-reliant and independent of the colonizers. The extreme steps taken to prevent this makes predictable the dangers Blacks in Dayton would face with any similar efforts to break away from the bankers, real estate brokers, and merchants who colonize them. The economic (and constabulary) importance of such acts of war are urgent and quite analogous to U.S. "altruism" in Asia, for example. In fact, it is the same thing: the preservation or establishment of colonies for economic and political exploitation. Although race is a contributory factor, the economic vested interests alone are sufficient to create the ultimate predicament. Those who are the objects of such exploitation by superior and corrupt forces have two simple choices—accommodate or die.

At whatever expense, inconvenience, or irrational and

immoral behavior, these colonies, at home and abroad, are being preserved. The imminent danger to Blacks in the United States is that they are no longer willing to accommodate, or even tolerate, colonial occupation.* In Dayton, colonial domination included denying loans to otherwise well-qualified citizens whose simple wish was to buy a home outside the colony, thereby partially escaping colonization. In Indochina, it includes denying the right of the South Vietnamese to buy rice more cheaply and conveniently from an Asian neighbor, Taiwan (Formosa) or Thailand.

When the Decisive Decade—the 1960's—began, the United States was not a leader among the world's rice growers, exporters, or consumers. At the close of the decade, the United States still was not a big rice consumer, nor even a major rice grower. But, as an exporter, the United States was number one, despite a "Green Revolution" that dramatically increased rice yields in the Philippines, India, Pakistan, and South Vietnam—all customers for U.S. rice. As the decade closed, the United States still produced less than 1 percent of the world's rice but was, incredibly, the world's leading rice exporter, consuming only 35 percent of its rice produced, selling the other 65 percent abroad to a hundred countries, but mainly to South Korea and South Vietnam.

In 1963, at the time of the death of President Kennedy

* This being the essence of Black Power: "Black power means black people coming together to form a political force and either electing representatives or forcing their representatives to speak their needs. It's an economic and physical bloc that can exercise its strength in the black community instead of letting the job to the Democratic or Republican parties or a white-controlled black man set up as a puppet to represent black people. We pick the brother and make sure he fulfills *our* needs. Black power doesn't mean anti-white, violence, separatism or any other racist things the press says it means. It's saying, 'Look, buddy, we're not laying a vote on you unless you lay so many schools, hospitals, playgrounds and jobs, on us.' " Stokely Carmichael, 1967, as quoted in *Life*, December 26, 1969, pp. 104-105.

in Texas, military involvement in Vietnam had already begun, though on a relatively small "advisory" scale. Thailand, a key country in Asia's Rice Bowl community, was by far the world's biggest exporter of rice, selling to many of her neighbors, including South Vietnam. For two years, President Kennedy had had agonizing doubts about the intrusion of U.S. forces and matériel in Vietnam, and, in fact—shortly before his death—had acceded to the persistence of Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (Democrat of Montana) and agreed to a pullout. The President's condition, however, was that the pullout would have to wait until after the 1964 elections so that he would not be branded as militarily soft and soft on Communism, thus running an increased risk of defeat. So, in early October, 1963, he ordered Defense Secretary McNamara to tell the press that 1,000 of the then 16,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam would be withdrawn immediately, with the likelihood that the entire force would be withdrawn by the end of 1965. That President Kennedy's assassination was related to his plan to withdraw U.S. presence from Vietnam was broadly hinted in memoirs by Kenneth O'Donnell, a JFK intimate and confidant.*

In 1965—the year President Kennedy had secretly planned to complete the pullout from Vietnam—his successor, President Johnson, a Texan, secretly began a massive buildup of U.S. troops and munitions there. This buildup was—in direct contradiction of President Johnson's campaign pledges—accompanied by "tactical defoliation" of Vietnam jungles and rice paddies. In that same period, U.S. rice growers tripled their production from the 1960 volume, and the United States had replaced Thailand as the world's number one exporter. In less than a decade, the world's biggest rice-growing community of nations had reverted from a rice-surplus area to an area of severe dependency, buying rice from one of the world's smallest producers: the United States of America.

In the 1968-69 rice season, South Vietnam enjoyed a

* See "LBJ and the Kennedys," *Life*, August 7, 1970, pp. 45-56.

record-high rice yield, owing to the new strain of high-yield IRS-8 (international rice strain number 8) and a good-weather year. The country might well have become rice-independent except, as a U.S. intelligence source stated in 1969: "South Vietnam did have a good rice crop, but it didn't get into Saigon." This he attributed to "the fortunes of war." In other words, there was difficulty getting the rice from the defoliated rice fields to the market places. A staff member of Senator Ellender's Agriculture and Forestry Committee explained it further: "They could have a big crop, and can't ship because of 'enemy activity.' "

Such defoliations and enemy activity are the same activities that chased the Muslims from St. Clair County, Alabama, with cyanide-poisoned cattle, defoliated pastures, and threats to the lives of the peaceful black owners. No tactic was too irrational to be employed by the colonizers, and the forces of law were used to support the colonizers rather than the peaceful, law-abiding citizens.

A basic tactic in the food-war syndrome came to light in 1969 when South Vietnam sought to resist U.S. rice colonization by shopping in other markets—Taiwan or Thailand.

In the fall of 1969, word began leaking out of the State Department that South Vietnam was buying 40,000 tons of rice from her southeastern neighbor, Taiwan. That word came as particularly bad news to USDA Secretary Clifford Hardin, who saw in this the possible loss of an outlet for U.S. surplus rice for which the USDA was guaranteeing price supports to U.S. rice growers. Hardin was also in the process of setting rice acreage allotments for U.S. rice growers, which, because of increasing world production, had dwindled from 2.4 million acres in 1968 to 2.1 million acres in 1969. While U.S. rice acreage shrank by about 10 percent, U.S. rice production had fallen about 15 percent—from 105 million hundred weight (cwt.) to 90 million cwt.

Added to this predicament of a dwindling demand for U.S. rice, then, was the shocking news that South Vietnam, a country whom the "fortunes of war" had made

increasingly dependent on imports (despite increased production), might turn, nonetheless, to a non-U.S. source for rice. U.S. rice growers, in the meantime, had been assured a large shipment to South Vietnam through P.L. 480, the foreign aid gimmick by which the United States customarily ships surpluses to needy countries in exchange for military and diplomatic favors or repayment on long-term bases. (The U.S. taxpayer pays for these surpluses, however, via price supports to the growers.)

Hardin promptly went to the State Department's Agency for International Development (AID), which administers P.L. 480, but was unable to get immediate confirmation of the sale or to influence the arrangements in any way. This required Hardin's trump card—a call on the rice empire on Capitol Hill, where foreign aid was being debated. This set the stage for an unprecedented look at the Rice Cup, vested interests, and the secret uses of food as a military and diplomatic weapon.

"It was a mess between AID and Ag [USDA]," a spokesman for Senate Agriculture and Forestry Chairman Ellender said. "AID had okayed this sale and refused to let Ag know so that we could get this stuff [rice] bought from our sources. . . . The AID bill is going to be cut back substantially. We're supporting Vietnam entirely; we send them every dollar they've got over there, and to turn around and buy something like that from one of our friends is a slap in the face."*

In addition to organizing a quick campaign to block the Taiwan rice sale, the rice state representatives on Capitol Hill sought to retaliate against the Nixon administration for "permitting" it. Not only had U.S. rice growers anticipated sales to South Korea (the biggest single U.S. rice customer) and South Vietnam (among the hundred countries who buy U.S. rice) but, depending on the "fortunes of war," there was the chance also that Thailand, once the world's largest exporter, might need U.S. rice.

As Senate Agriculture Chairman Ellender stated in an

* Interview, December 17, 1969.

interview, December 18, 1969: "We in this country increased the production of rice for the expressed purpose of trying to meet their [South Vietnam's] demands, and instead of buying from us, they buy from Taiwan, and we're going to try to reduce grants made to them in order to improve their economy. South Vietnam, and Thailand, if necessary, were the countries we were to provide rice for. It was thought that *if Thailand was attacked from the north, they might be without rice.*"

Senator Ellender didn't explain exactly whom he expected to attack Thailand from the north, but he left no doubt at all that war, from whatever source, would disrupt the accessibility of rice for the people, and U.S. rice sales would be enhanced accordingly.*

* Assessing motives and separating them from happenstance cause and effect is difficult in these matters. So, in this circumstance, it seems fair to include the most favorable explanation I've read for Ellender's role. Richard Wilson, not a notably liberal columnist, discussed these dynamics in the context of Ellender's lack of sympathy for the poor who fail to sign up for the Food Stamp program because they lack the $18 or $20 required in advance to do so.

Wrote Wilson, in the *Evening Star*, February 26, 1969, p. A-19:

"Now, Ellender is not a wicked man. He is a compassionate man but he, his colleagues on the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, and officials of the Department of Agriculture have dedicated themselves to a single purpose, the welfare of the producers of farm commodities. The reason for the existence of the food distribution program is not to be found primarily in the hungry bellies of the poor, but in the programs adopted in Congress to dispose of farm surpluses and thus sustain what is deemed to be a fair level of farm prices.

"Economic objectives and humanitarian aims are often in conflict. One pertinent example: the Agriculture Department drags its feet on the development of low-cost, highly fortified foods for domestic use for the obvious reason that they will compete with natural processed foods.

"But that is not the only conflict. The idea of helping the poor is not given high priority in four of the most conservative committees of Congress which control the destiny of the multibillion dollar

In any event, the failure of Thailand to meet with the expected adversity only placed greater pressure on the Rice Cup delegation on Capitol Hill to undo the Taiwan sale and to make its point with the Nixon administration to guard against future "mistakes." Beyond that, the rice Congressmen would work to insure acreage and price support protection for their rice-growing constituents.

These three jobs were divided along the rice power lines in the House and Senate. Senator Ellender would handle the foreign policy aspects. Meanwhile, the domestic politics would be engineered by Louisiana Congressman Edwin W. Edwards, a member and past president of the International Rice Association, the elected whip of the Louisiana-Mississippi delegation in the House, and a member of the House Judiciary and House Internal Security* committees.

Ellender's rationale and strategy were simple enough:

agricultural programs. These are the House and Senate Agriculture Committees and the House and Senate subcommittees on appropriations for agriculture.

"The doctrine in these old-line conservative citadels of Congress is that the commodity distribution and food stamp program is 'a food program, not a welfare program.' This type of reasoning is perfectly compatible with policies which caused the Department of Agriculture to turn back to the Treasury $277 million which could have been used for food for the poor last year while paying incredible subsidies rising as high as $3 and $4 million each to big farm operating companies.

"The Nixon administration is now face to face with the realities of hunger in America and its intolerable embarrassment to the free enterprise system while enormous subsidies are being paid out to sustain prices through reduction of production. This screaming contradiction in policy can be corrected by recognizing that helping the poor get enough to eat is a welfare imperative. The way to do that is to end control over the programs by agencies, committees and officials whose primary concern is the prosperity of commercial agriculture."

* This is the committee which, in 1968, recommended concentration camps for black "guerrillas" and protesters against the war.

"If they [South Vietnam] use the cash we gave them, we'll just take it back from them. That's what I'm trying to do."

Ellender was well situated for the attempt. On November 26, 1969, the administration's foreign aid bill was being debated, and Joseph A. Mendenhall, assistant administrator of AID's Vietnam Bureau, was appearing as a witness before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Sitting across from witness Mendenhall: Ellender, architect of rice protectionism.

Mendenhall's role was to absolve the State Department of softness toward rice-independence for South Vietnam and to defend the administration generally against punishment by Ellender, who insisted that the State Department could—and, indeed, *should*—have prevented the sale of the 40,000 tons of rice to South Vietnam by Taiwan.

The following are excerpts taken directly from the subcommittee transcript of the Mendenhall-Ellender exchange:

Senator Ellender: All right. I just want to know.

Respecting this stabilization program which you mentioned, did you say that the imports have increased greatly?

Mr. Mendenhall: Yes, sir.

Senator Ellender: Why is that?

Mr. Mendenhall: They increased basically because of the rise in military expenditures by the Vietnamese Government in the past couple of years, and the resultant increased budgetary deficit which has forced piasters into the economy means that demand is generated for goods. Part of that demand falls on imports.

Senator Ellender: What countries primarily export to Vietnam?

Mr. Mendenhall: Under our commercial import program we are furnishing over 62 percent of the total imports from the United States. The balance is almost

completely furnished by countries such as Taiwan, Korea, and Singapore. Petroleum products, for example, come from Singapore. This balance of about 37 or 38 percent comes from less-developed countries, the principal ones of which I have mentioned under either barter arrangements or under special letter of credit arrangements which require the recipient country to spend those funds in the United States.

In other words, we have made special arrangements in connection with the balance of our purchases for Vietnam to avoid adverse effects on the balance of payments of the United States.

Senator Ellender: The 62 percent you speak of, did I understand you to say that that includes not only exports from us but exports from Taiwan?

Mr. Mendenhall: In fiscal year 1969, 62.7 percent came from the United States only.

Senator Ellender: So that 38 percent is from Taiwan and Thailand, I presume?

Mr. Mendenhall: Taiwan, Singapore, Korea, those are the big ones. There are a few other small ones.

Senator Ellender: Do you supervise that?

Mr. Mendenhall: Yes, sir.

Senator Ellender: Do you see to it that the funds that we furnish for that purpose are used wisely?

Mr. Mendenhall: Yes, sir.

Senator Ellender: Two years ago the Department of Agriculture asked that rice production in this country be increased by 17 percent in order to have rice available to feed the South Vietnamese. I understand that AID bought rice from Taiwan instead of the United States. Will you explain why?

Mr. Mendenhall: I think I know the transaction you are talking about.

Senator Ellender: This is why I am asking this because it is a very serious thing.

Mr. Mendenhall: May I explain this to you?

Senator Ellender: Just a minute. I want first to give you a little background. I happen to be chairman of the

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. Agriculture is getting kicked around by every Member of the House except the few who depend on the farmers for their votes. It has been very expensive, I admit. But some of these expenses were incurred because we were asked to procure food, in this case for Vietnam, 17 percent increase in acreage production, so as to produce this rice.

I understand that a couple of days ago, maybe this week, instead of buying this rice which we now have on hand—it really does not belong to the Government but the Government has a big interest in it—you folks through the State Department have permitted the sale of rice by Taiwan to South Vietnam.

Now explain it to me.

Mr. Mendenhall: May I say first that I completely share your interest in the farmer. I was born on the farm and my father is still a farmer.

Senator Ellender: I am not interested in that. I am interested in finding out why it is that you people, who are trying to do a good job here as you have just said, in the circumstances I have outlined, are permitting dollars that we are now appropriating to be used to buy rice from Taiwan. I understand you are also going to permit the purchase of rice from Thailand.

Mr. Mendenhall: Senator, no AID dollars are being used or going to be used to finance the purchase of rice from Thailand or Taiwan. I would like to explain to you what has happened, but there are no AID dollars involved in this at all.

As I said, I have a great deal of sympathy for the rice growers here in the United States. I am also interested in the United States balance of payments provision. I want to see us sell commodities wherever we can.

What has happened in Vietnam is this: A sudden emergency has arisen in connection with the rice market in Saigon. Starting with the adoption of the austerity taxes about October 20, there was a 25 percent increase

in rice prices to the consumer in Saigon. Even though these taxes had no direct effect on the price of rice and only modest indirect effect by increasing the price of gasoline, the price of rice zoomed up.

This led to a great increase, very suddenly, in the drawdown of the rice stocks of the Vietnamese Government. Now, those stocks normally are drawn down at the rate of about 700 tons a day. As a result of this, the drawdown tripled by going up to 2,000 tons per day.

Now, when this first started, everybody expected and hoped this was simply something that had occurred suddenly and that the panic would quickly subside. Obviously the price went up because people were beginning to hoard rice—they were buying it and hoarding it. It was hoped that this would stop. But it has continued.

When this first started, the Vietnamese Government in early November indicated to us that they felt they were going to have to go to a neighboring country to buy some rice to meet this emergency because their stocks might well be exhausted. You can well realize what a terrible thing exhaustion of rice stocks would be. We initially urged them not to buy rice from another Asian country because we hoped this drawdown wouldn't continue at this rate. But it did continue.

Last week the Vietnamese Government told us that they were going to have to go ahead and buy 40,000 tons of rice from Taiwan, or Thailand. They said they would have to buy it there because these were the only places from which they could get it soon enough into Vietnam to meet the problem in case their stocks were exhausted.

Senator Ellender: What moneys are they using to buy the rice?

Mr. Mendenhall: They are using their own foreign exchange earnings.

Senator Ellender: Yes, sir. The dollars.

Mr. Mendenhall: Yes, sir; in dollars.

Senator Ellender: Money we furnished them indirectly.

Mr. Mendenhall: I agree—money they earned from the U.S. Department of Defense.

Senator Ellender: No doubt about it. That is why I cannot understand, that you are using $240 million to stabilize the economy of Vietnam.

Mr. Mendenhall: But there is no alternative under the circumstances to this rice transaction in the area. I don't like to see it any more than you do. I have to agree there is no alternative.

Senator Ellender: I do not know how much it will cost to do this, how much we will lose by it, but I shall try to take it from your request for this stabilization fund, because somebody has to pay for it. I am sick and tired of having the farmer kicked around in our country, as in this case, when the farmers are trying to assist by growing food for Vietnam. That means there will be a curtailment of rice production next year in our own country and it is going to mean also the surplus which we now have will dangle over the market and keep the price down. That is how we get kicked around. I am sick and tired of it.

Mr. Mendenhall: I have complete sympathy.

Senator Ellender: We have to do something about it. You and the Ambassadors are the men to get that off our hands. As I said, somebody is going to have to pay for the surplus we now have on hand. Otherwise, the cost of the farm program is going to increase more than we anticipated, and we are innocent folks; we are not responsible for it.

* * *

Senator Ellender: You folks do not seem to consider the effect that all of this is having on our own economy. I wish we had someone to make a case for our balance of payments as you have made it for South Vietnam.

You people come here and ask for this and do not seem to have any idea of what it is going to mean for our own economy.

Mr. Mendenhall: I completely share your interest in our balance-of-payments problem, Senator Ellender. If we could have avoided this we would have.

Senator Ellender: That does not help a bit, just to feel that way. It strikes me that our AID people should be able in some manner to alleviate the circumstances, because we are putting up all the funds for South Vietnam. Imagine the huge amount of money that our soldiers are spending in South Vietnam, which has a tendency of bettering their economy. All of that comes from your own country, your own country.

Mr. Mendenhall: Yes, sir.

(Discussion off the record.)

Senator Ellender: You cannot rectify this rice condition?

Mr. Mendenhall: Because of the emergency, Senator.

Senator Ellender: Why is there an emergency?

Mr. Mendenhall: I explained it to you.

Senator Ellender: You explained it but why did you not know about it?

Mr. Mendenhall: No one could have predicted that as a result of the austerity taxes you would get a dramatic increase in rice prices and this would lead to such hoarding. No one could have predicted that there would be such an increase in purchases and hoarding that the Government stocks would be drawn down to the point where they might run out. I am as sorry for it as you are.

* * *

Senator Ellender: I was in Russia for 6 days. I did not go to Saigon or Thailand because of the war. I knew I could not get anything there to be of assistance to the study I was making because of the presence of war. I am now sorry that I did not go. I was in South Vietnam five times. My last visit was in 1962, just before Diem

was assassinated. We had been spending there quite a bit of money. I tried to curtail it to a large extent but without any success. What was that you were smiling about? Something I said?

Mr. Mendenhall: No.

Senator Ellender: I was there in 1962, and I was there in 1961. I was there in 1955 or 1956. When was Diem sworn in, do you remember?

Mr. Mendenhall: 1954.

Senator Ellender: I was there in 1954-1955, anyhow five times.

Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to clutter the record any more because you have covered it very well. And I have another appointment to make. But I am hopeful that, when you go back to your office, you, in particular, Mr. Ambassador—I was informed that the Department of Agriculture did all they could to sell this rice instead of having it purchased from Taiwan—I understand that you are now going to buy some from Thailand.

Mr. Mendenhall: May I say it is not we who are buying the rice, it is the Government of Vietnam.

Senator Ellender: You can tell them what they ought to do in view of all we are giving them. I am going to examine your requests in an effort to determine how they can best be reduced to cover the cost of rice surplus occasioned by the increased production which the Government requested as an accommodation for the South Vietnamese.

(Discussion off the record.)

Senator [Gale] McGee: I would agree that this never should have happened. I hope we would not create another mistake by trying to get even with one. I have been so carried away with how much there is to do there now. We ought to learn from this one by not doing it again. I hope the Senator will not follow through by suggesting we knock out this program to achieve that. Maybe we can find some other way. Maybe we can assign it to the Pentagon.

Senator Ellender: I tell you I was successful in doing what we desired to do in South Korea by telling Mr. Syngman Rhee. He wanted to impose a tax on all of the goods that came from our country to help South Korea. He was insisting on that; he needed the money. The Ambassador was all worked up about the situation; he could not talk to the old man. I talked to Mr. Rhee and told him simply.

Mr. Rhee, I understand you want to impose a tax on goods that come from our country for use in your country.

Yes, sir, we need the money.

All right. I have no objection, but remember every dollar of tax you collect we will take it off your foreign aid.

He did not impose a tax. That is what I would like to pass on to the people in South Vietnam, that there is a way for us to protect our interests. In other words, they ought to deal with us since this product was produced for their use.

Mr. Mendenhall: Senator, the Vietnamese Government was very reluctant to do this. The only reason they did it was that it was the only way they could get the rice in time because of the difference in shipping time.

Senator Ellender: You have enough rice there to feed them for almost a year. It is just an excuse they give you. If you folks use the little power that you have there and tell them what you will do if they do not do this, you will have some control. I have found that we are too easy with them. We do not exert ourselves enough.

Mr. Mendenhall: We have gone into the figures on their stock position and what they are expecting to have. There is a very real risk that they could run out by the middle of December at the present rate of drawdown on the stocks. I completely share your view.

* * *

Senator Ellender: We will find some way to get that back in this bill.

* * *

Senator [Milton] Young: Mr. Chairman, if I may say, I share fully sentiment expressed by the Senator from Louisiana. With all the money we are pouring into their country, to say nothing about the lives that are lost, if they can't buy from us when we have surpluses like we have, it just doesn't make sense.

Senator Ellender: Especially when this was produced for them. We increased our rice acreage by 17 percent to help these people out. Here we have the dangling over the market and facing a big cut in rice, and then it is going to hurt our farm program.

Senator McGee: I agree in our total effort that we ought to honor this commitment.

Senator Ellender: If it is not, I am going to find some way to get it out of this and you let the administration know about that.

Senator McGee: I just don't think we need any more problems than we already have. This is one. I think if we are going to Vietnamize we are going to get some other lumps in this process. It sounds a lot easier than it is going to be, in fact. If you are going to Vietnamize it, you are not going to Americanize it. It can't go both ways at the same time. It is going to be rough and hard to take. We have to roll with it gracefully and protect the commitment that we have made here that can totally wreck this thing.

We ought to take the measures to protect it and not wreck the program in trying to protect it. I think we have that capability and ought to initiate it. I will back the Senator in trying to do that.

Senator Ellender: My dear sir, the effect that it has had on wheat, Senator Young knows that Mr. Freeman

made an error, thought there would be a shortage of wheat. We have a big surplus now. Are they buying from us? No. They get it a little cheaper and we are putting up all the money.

* * *

Senator McGee: To get rice from the States would have taken much longer than getting it from Taiwan or Thailand. Twice as long in terms of shipping time.

Senator Young: The difference would not be over 2 weeks, would it?

Mr. Mendenhall: It would be about a month.

Senator McGee: I think this makes some rationale for it. It does not eliminate the kind of problem that Senator Ellender has focused on here. I would hope that even this committee could recommend or put some heat on trying to compensate for this rather serious error. I don't think you are going to do it without costing us still more by taking it out of the program.

Senator Ellender: That is all right. We will find some way. I did it in South Korea and I will do it again in South Vietnam.

You are going to telephone the Ambassador about that?

Mr. [William H.] Sullivan: Yes, sir.

Mr. Mendenhall: I think it should be understood clearly that 32,000 tons has already been bought from Taiwan. That is a concluded deal.

Senator Ellender: We will take it out of this program right here. I promise you that. I will be darned if I am going to sit here and on the Agriculture Committee and sweat out the programs and then be confronted with a thing of this kind. I know that something could be done.

I have nothing else to say.

Senator McGee: Senator Young.

Senator Young: I have nothing else.

Senator McGee: I have no additional questions at this point. If anything else pops we will be back at you. I

appreciate your patience in probing these matters with us in a very considerate way. It is very helpful and it has made a strong record. I hope that AID can find some graceful way around this last problem because there is no point in opening up new problems in retribution against an old problem, a crisis which has already been here and gone and the consequences are already expressed.

This just is not the way to run a store. I am not about to be a part on this committee of creating a new one, but I want to lend my energies in trying to adjust, to ameliorate this very understandable distortion of an expectation in the rice picture. I repeat that if we are going to Vietnamize, we had better quit talking out of both sides of our mouths and work at it.

Thank you very much. It is good to see you again.

Mr. Mendenhall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.*

In an interview, Senator Ellender stoutly defended his role and attitude regarding the continued dependency of Asian countries on U.S. rice and other products and said that he "spoke for all the Senators in the rice-producing states."

Just as Senator Ellender spoke unanimously for the rice industry representatives in the Senate, Congressman Edwards was pleased with his role as spokesman for the powerful group of rice protectionists in the House. Edwards' dedication to the role is strongly attested to by his credentials in the rice industry and also by the fact that he quite openly continues to lobby for the rice industry—even on his Congressionally franked stationery. At the lower left-hand corner of Edwards' official envelopes is a design showing stalks of rice and a

* *Senate Hearings Before the Committee on Appropriations, Foreign Assistance, and Related Programs Appropriations,* Ninety-first Congress, First Session, pp. 315-25. This testimony occurred before the Senate Appropriations Committee, November 26, 1969.

cornucopia-type barrel with sacks of potatoes rolling out. The legend across the design exhorts: "For appeal in every meal use Louisiana rice and yams."

Edwards' thrust is by no means all rhetoric. In concert with Ellender and others in position to effect it, Edwards moved to dump the anticipated U.S. rice surplus on South Korea, using such persuasives as P.L. 480 and other firm-but-gentle pressures. So pleased was Edwards with his efforts that he outlined them in a press release on December 11, 1969, two days after the House rice group held a massive strategy session with Agriculture Secretary Hardin:

—Agriculture officials have taken action and are optimistic that money will be budgeted to dispose of rice stocks under the provisions of Title II, P.L. 480. No funds had been scheduled for use under this Title prior to our meeting. We pointed out that $10 million per year over a three-year period would exhaust the 6.2 million hundred-weight (cwt.) now held by USDA in CCC takeover stocks. Title II of the Act relates to government use of grains in schools, prisons, worldwide volunteer and other institutions.

—USDA, Bureau of the Budget and other agencies are making a concentrated effort to obtain a large Title I, P.L. 480 order from Korea. Korea has indicated an interest in four to five hundred thousand tons of rice; however, P.L. 480 funds are limited and Japan has offered the rice to Korea on very favorable credit terms and at low prices. USDA is now moving to capture all or a large part of the order. If we succeed, most California and Southern medium grain stocks could be moved and this would greatly increase our chances for little or no acreage cuts for 1970. . . .

—Additionally, Congressmen representing the industry argued that an additional 4.5 million cwt. could be disposed of through Title I, P.L. 480 sales which have not but could be budgeted if proper effort were made to do so. This would reduce the total estimated

carryover from an industry standpoint of 8.8 million cwt. . . .

—The overall poor situation with reference to the industry was emphasized by the large group of Congressmen who attended the meeting, including W. R. Poage (Tex.), Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture; Wilbur Mills (Ark.), Chairman of Ways and Means: Hale Boggs, House Democratic Whip; all Members of the Louisiana and Arkansas Delegations; six Congressmen from Texas, five from California and two from Mississippi. The Congressmen present presented a unified argument and firmly recommended to the Secretary that acreage levels not be cut in 1970 unless absolutely necessary under existing regulations and based upon known and intended disappearance for 1970. Additionally, it was pointed out by all present that a need for an increase in support prices was clearly indicated and the Secretary was urged to make an immediate study to justify ordering an increase in support from 65% to 75% of parity. . . .

—This meeting was attended by the most political muscle I have ever witnessed at a rice meeting and I frankly state that the Secretary of Agriculture was impressed by facts and figures advanced by our Delegations and I am cautiously optimistic that the end result will not be as damaging to the industry in 1970 as had been predicted only six weeks ago. In the meantime, we will continue our efforts on a Washington level to move additional stocks of rice through and in applicable government programs as this appears to be the only way to substantially decrease existing stocks and keep the industry on a sound basis and in a healthy condition. It is expected that a firm announcement will be made by the Department as to 1970 acreage levels and 1970 support price levels sometime between Christmas and New Year's Day and in the meantime we will continue pressing for consummation of the Korean order now under consideration which will have a dramatic effect on the ultimate decision to be made by the Secretary in the last week of this year.

The result of all this attempt by colonized Asian countries to become independent of U.S. rice barons was Ellender's promised slice of $658 million from the administration's foreign aid to such countries, plus a scurry by USDA Secretary Hardin to raise both price supports and acreage allotments for the heavily subsidized U.S. rice farmers. Considering the unequaled power of the Rice Cup Congressmen, it would be extremely difficult for them to lose such an undertaking.

There remained, however, the matter that Thailand, still a big rice exporter, might also sell 20,000 tons of rice to her neighbor, South Vietnam. But Rice Cup Congressmen, with their hands firmly on the U.S. military machine, had a solution for that possibility, too, as reported by *Newsweek*:

> Even less vengeful members of the Appropriations Committee argued that Saigon had acted hastily [in the Taiwan rice deal]. said Sen. Gale McGee of Wyoming: "This never should have happened." And to complete their vengeance, rice-state politicians are attempting to dump whatever U.S. surplus there may be on South Korea and Indonesia. This would neatly slap the Thais for trying to move in on the Vietnamese market, since Indonesia is a big importer of rice from Thailand. (But this maneuver may fail, since the Japanese are also hard at work trying to dispose of their surplus rice in Indonesia and Korea.)
>
> Malice: All this left the Thais understandably grumpy. The U.S., huffed Thailand's Minister of Economics, doesn't understand the problems of developing nations. From Saigon, a U.S. aide replied that it was "absurd and regrettable to think there was malice aforethought" in the U.S. crackdown. But malice or no, the United States had used a considerable amount of muscle to keep Thai rice out of Saigon markets—and that boded ill for the day when the rice glut hits Asia in full force, and South

Vietnam joins Thailand, Taiwan and Japan in competing for export markets. "The U.S. has some say in what [the South Vietnamese] will do or not do, because it's all U.S.-financed," explained an aide to Ellender's Senate Agriculture Committee. *"And Thailand is our buddy, too. We've got troops there now."* [Emphasis added.]*

Similarly, and ostensibly for altruistic purposes, the United States would soon have troops in neutral Cambodia—an invasion of Vietcong "sanctuaries," President Nixon said, to protect the lives of U.S. servicemen as they withdrew from Vietnam. This two-month military excursion into Cambodia to protect American lives lost the lives of hundreds of U.S. servicemen, and the shifting reasons given for the invasion were as unclear as what U.S. servicemen actually *did* in Cambodia.

Looking to the June 30, 1970, deadline, the date President Nixon had set for having U.S. ground troops out of Cambodia, columnist Jack Anderson reported what seemed to have been a significant, if not a major, assignment of U.S. servicemen in "friendly" Cambodia:

> In their haste to get out of Cambodia on schedule, U.S. troops are burning captured rice that is urgently needed to feed hungry Vietnamese refugees.
>
> The U.S. publicity machine has been grinding out stories about the capture of 2,500 tons of Vietcong rice and its humanitarian use to feed the refugees. But my associate Les Whitten, writing from the combat zone, reports:
>
> "Despite the artificial winds stirred up by the propagandists, the rice is one place and the refugees another. To be sure, about 37, perhaps 40 tons a day have been trucked or otherwise transported to the refugees who need at least 40 tons a day.

* *Newsweek*, January 12, 1970, p. 60.

> "But at this rate, the Army can't move the rice out of Cambodia fast enough to meet the July 1 withdrawal deadline. A maximum of 1,600 tons can be shipped across the Cambodian border in time. This would leave 900 tons of food to be destroyed."
>
> *U.S. troops are solving the problem, states Whitten, by burning the rice.* [Emphasis added.*]

In Indochina, such chores are handled by the U.S. Marines and other members of the uniformed military service. Back home, the National Guard, the state police, sheriff's patrols, and civil disturbance units stood ready for duty in Lynn County, Texas, St. Clair County, Alabama, South Side Chicago, and Memphis, Tennessee—for those, too, are sites of U.S. altruism, good business, and fault psychology. They all are scenes in a common war.

D. *The Blackpoor Soldier: A Mercenary Suicide*

Few aspects of the Blackpoor experience are more cruelly ironic than the fact that young black men are required—by their poverty and Blackness—to give their lives ostensibly in pursuit of freedom, while actually denying it to themselves and to their military victims elsewhere around the world.

A black Vietnam veteran, still out of work six months after returning to Washington, D.C., had to face the fact that citizens of the nation's Capital—70 percent of them black—do not have the same right to vote he thought he was obtaining for the South Vietnamese.

Pathetically, he faced also the fact of being a mercenary:

> I did my thing, now I'm waiting for the Man to do his.
>
> I wiped out entire villages for him. It wasn't my war; my cause is here in America right here. It's a carpet-baggers' war.

* "The Washington Merry-Go-Round," Washington *Post*, May 27, 1970, p. D-11.

> I shot little kids, like the little kids who shine shoes. And that hurt me, man. . . . Everybody feels guilty about shooting kids.
>
> We've gone on patrol, search and destroy, I've seen the Man give commands to wipe out the entire village. We don't know if these people are VC or not. We burned the village out. This is wrong.
>
> It's not a question of what we're going to do now. It's what the Man is going to do. We've done ours for him. He pumped a bunch of lies into us about communism. Those people over there are just trying to survive. I feel like we did the same thing to the VC that the Man has been doing to us. . . .
>
> I feel as though I've been cheated, taken, like me and my people have been taken all our lives.*

Part of the same cruel irony is the fact that the Job Corps—ballyhooed as the instrument to correct whatever was wrong in the chemistry of the young Black and his deliberately bad public school system—was, in fact, little more than an express vehicle to Vietnam.

But this was quite in accordance with the concealed designs of the Moynihans, McNamaras, and Shrivers at the outset of the so-called war on poverty. This was part of the Moynihan contribution as a member of the OEO Task Force in 1964, during the period of his formulation of the "Moynihan Report," or "The Negro Family."

In the report, Moynihan bemoaned what he regarded as a low representation of Blacks in the armed services:

> In 1964 Negroes constituted 11.8 percent of the population, but probably remain at 8 percent of the Armed Forces.
>
> The significance of Negro under-representation in the Armed Forces is greater than might at first be supposed. If Negroes were represented in the same proportions in the military as they are in the population, they would

* Washington *Post*, June 8, 1969, p. 32.